

**YEAR
STAMP**



in it.

Contents checked
for transfer to
D.R.O.

(Sgd.)

Date 2/7/70

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH
OFFICE

DEPT.

ARABIAN

FILE No. NBS 21 (Part)

TITLE: SAUDI ARABIA:

CO OPERATION WITH KUWAIT AND IRAQ

W
414

DO NOT RETURN TO THE ISSUING OFFICE OR P.A.

[illegible]

Registry Address

Room No. 115,
F.O. Building,
Downing Street.

in it.

YEAR STAMP

1968/9

FILE No. **NBS 21**

SECRET

(LAST PAPER)

1

2/41

Mr. [unclear]
Mr. [unclear]
Mr. [unclear]



RECEIVED IN
ARCHIVES No. 5
30 DEC 1968

BRITISH EMBASSY,
JEDDA

3 December, 1968

NBS 2/1

Dear Geoffrey,

Saudi Co-operation with Kuwait and Iraq

On account of developments of which you are aware, I decided to telegraph the gist of this letter (our telegram No. 691) in which I was attempting an explanation of the conflicting evidence about Saudi attitudes towards co-operation with Kuwait and Iraq.

2. You yourself, in your letter of 23 October from Kuwait recorded the Amir of Kuwait's complaint that the Saudis were not more co-operative and suggested that I might drop a hint to the Saudis about this. I raised the matter with the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Sayyid Omar Saqqaf on 25 November, and will follow up when the opportunity arises with others. Omar Saqqaf's reaction was to dispute my premise that there was any lack of co-operation with Kuwait. I pointed out that the Kuwait Government clearly noticed the lack, and that I had had indications from both Emir Fahd and Emir Sultan that they believed Kuwait played a bad role by harbouring communist, Baathi and Egyptian subversive organisations which were a threat to the stability of the Gulf. There was perhaps room for practical co-operation on this subject. Saqqaf brushed this aside also. While it was true that subversion was mounted from Kuwait, he said, the Kuwait Government were hardly to be blamed, given the conditions obtaining in Kuwait: the large population of non-Kuwaitis, and the legal and constitutional restrictions on police action - he instanced the impossibility under Kuwaiti law of holding suspects without charging them. Even in Saudi Arabia, where things were ordered better, it had not been possible to prevent subversive elements causing an explosion near the United States Embassy last year, though the culprits had been apprehended later.

G.G. Arthur, Esq., CMG,
F.C.O.

-1-

SECRET

(LAST PAPER)



5. This seems to be the background to King Feisal's ambiguous references both in conversation with me and apparently with the Shah to the possibility of co-operation with Kuwait and Iraq. Such co-operation has obvious advantages for him and equally obvious dangers. Hardan Tikriti visited here with the Iraqi Foreign Minister a week before the Shah's State Visit, and Tikriti had a private interview with King Feisal about which we know nothing. The accounts we have had of other conversations suggest that Palestine was the main topic of discussion. According to the Iraqi Charge d'Affaires here, the Saudis mentioned the Gulf briefly, and the Iraqis said, also briefly, that they thought the Arabs should agree among themselves first and then seek peaceful solutions by negotiation with the Iranians. But it seems likely that during the meeting with King Feisal there was some discussion of possible collaboration, and that what passed between them caused King Feisal to recommend to the Shah, or at least put forward for discussion, co-operation with Kuwait and Iraq - not just as a desirable thing for the future after Iran and Saudi Arabia had reached firm agreement, but as a possible present course of action. But, as reported in our telegram No. 691, the Shah seems to have reacted negatively at the time.

Yours ever,
W. Morris

(W. Morris)

Copies to:

Sir Denis Wright, KCMG, Tehran
T.E. Evans, Esq., CMG, DSO, Baghdad
Sir Stewart Crawford, KCMG, CVO, Bahrain Residency
J.A.N. Graham, Esq., Kuwait
A.B. Urwick, Esq., Washington

S E C R E T

.....



3. Even if Saqqaf was expressing his own honest opinion and not merely refusing to be drawn into a discussion, I am sure that he was not speaking for King Feisal and his brothers. They are critical of the Kuwait Government's failure (as they see it) to pay its subscriptions to the anti-revolutionary club and its policy of paying blackmail to the common enemies. This came out during your conversation with Sultan, and previously in mine with Fahd on 3 September. It has come out even more strongly in our contacts with the Saudi security authorities here when we have raised the possibility of tripartite collaboration such as we have been able to promote between ourselves, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. The Saudi response to our suggestion was a brusque rejection: the Kuwaitis were dismissed as creatures of Nasser, betrayers of secrets, harbourers of Soviet and Iraqi subversive networks. We thus arrive at a curious situation in which, although Saudi Arabia and Kuwait fundamentally share a common opinion and a common interest opposed to those of Iran on the controversial Gulf issues, relations between Iran and Kuwait are much more cordial than those between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

4. Nevertheless, I have no doubt that King Feisal is uncomfortable about exposing himself to Arab criticism by pursuing a policy of collaboration with Iran on his own. Other things being equal, he would welcome the protection which association with other Arab countries - Iraq and Kuwait - would afford him. (The other Gulf States hardly count in this.) The Saudi attitude towards the Iraqi Government is naturally different from their attitude towards the Kuwaiti Government. The Amir of Kuwait is, so to speak, "a traitor to his class"; with the Baath party, the Saudis start with the assumption that they are the enemy. There are no good Baathis, but experience in recent years has shown that some Baathis can be worse than others. The Saudis evidently see in Hardan Tikriti the possibility of something less intolerable than other recent Iraqi Governments, and a possible collaborator with them. But of course they are well aware of the extremely precarious tenure of any Iraqi Government, and the Saudi security authorities at least are quick to seize on any evidence of Iraqi subversion in the Gulf.

Saudi Arabia: Cooperation With Kuwait And Iraq. Co-Operation With Kuwait And Iraq. 3 Dec. 1968. MS Middle East Online: Iraq, 1914-1974: Selected files from series AIR, CAB, CO, FCO, FO, PREM, T, WO, The National Archives, Kew, UK FCO 8/1171. The National Archives (Kew, United Kingdom). Archives Unbound, link.gale.com/apps/doc/SC5107471556/GDSC?u=webdemo&sid=bookmark-GDSC&xid=aafa4cfa&pg=1. Accessed 11 Apr. 2022.